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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
“ Canine Flu Update”

San Bernardino, CA – The San Bernardino County Preventive Veterinary Services and Animal Care & Control Programs would like to provide dog owners with the following update about the recent canine influenza outbreak.

Canine influenza or “canine flu” is a new virus that is highly contagious and causes respiratory infection in dogs. It is believed to have jumped species from horses to racing greyhound dogs in Florida sometime in the last few years and gradually spread to dogs around the United States, including Southern California.

The symptoms can look a lot like the common disease “kennel cough”, because coughing is the most common symptom. However, dogs with canine influenza are usually sick for a longer period (weeks), and are more likely to have a fever, nasal discharge, listlessness, and to develop pneumonia. Most dogs develop the milder form of the disease (cough, mild fever). Some dogs require hospitalization and intensive care. The fatality rate is about 1-5% and it cannot be transmitted to humans.

At the present time, there is not a vaccine that protects against this disease, however, veterinary researchers at the University of Florida and Cornell University are working on developing one. The Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine does not protect dogs against canine influenza, however, it is a good idea to protect your dog with all vaccines recommended by your veterinarian.

Because canine flu is a newly-emerging disease, all dogs, regardless of breed or age are susceptible to infection and have no naturally-acquired or vaccine –induced immunity. If your dog develops a cough, call your veterinarian right away. If your dog is coughing, do not take it out to locations where it may infect other dogs. Keep it at home until it is well, or as directed by your veterinarian. Wash your hands well after handling any sick dog before touching your own dog.

Use caution in areas where other dogs may frequent such as dog parks. Avoid dog-to-dog contact. If you need to board your dog, check with the kennel to make sure the establishment has not experienced any problems with coughing or sick dogs.

For more information, please call the San Bernardino County Preventive Veterinary Services Program at 909-387-4862 or the Animal Care & Control Program toll free at 1-800-472-5609. Thank you.

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